



## Student Experience in the Research University 2017 Leadership and Involvement Topics

The Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) is a consortium of research institutions in the Association of American Universities who administer a common survey in an effort to generate knowledge and help further the goals of higher education in general and at the member institutions specifically. The SERU survey is a comprehensive survey of all undergraduate students at Texas A&M University (TAMU) intended to give faculty, students and administration in-depth insights into the undergraduate experience. SERU was most recently administered at TAMU in the spring, 2017. A total of 6,655 undergraduates completed the survey, representing 14% of the overall undergraduate population. Students were asked a variety of questions about their involvement in organizations and leadership experiences.

Students have opportunities to spend their time in a variety of ways. Table 1 indicates that students spend time on academic priorities more than cocurricular activities. In addition, they balance their time engaging in activities with others.

How many hours do you spend in a typical week (7 days) on the following activities?	16 or more	11-15	6-10	1-5	0
Attending classes, discussion sections, or labs	41%	39%	14%	5%	1%
Studying and other academic activities outside of class	38%	22%	27%	13%	1%
Participating in student clubs or organizations	8%	7%	18%	42%	24%
Participating in physical exercise recreational sports, or physically active hobbies	6%	8%	24%	50%	12%
Attending cultural events, movies, concerts, sports, or other entertainment with others	4%	6%	18%	58%	14%
Participating in spiritual or religious activities	3%	3%	10%	46%	38%
Performing community service or volunteer activities	3%	3%	9%	48%	37%

Table 1: Amount of time students spend per week on various activities

When asked their level of agreement with the statement, “Opportunities to develop leadership skills at Texas A&M are important to me,” 94% of the respondents strongly agreed, agreed, or agreed somewhat. Alternatively 6% of the respondents disagreed somewhat, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

Texas A&M undergraduate students have the opportunity to engage in about 1,200 recognized student organizations. When asked if they are or have been involved in a student organization 82% of students said they were. In addition, 38% are or have been an officer in a student organization. When students were asked if they are now or have participated in a leadership program at Texas A&M, 19% said yes. (The questions did not provide any specifics about defining or giving examples of a leadership program.)





Students involved in campus organizations have the opportunity to perform a variety of tasks to build skills. Table 2 shows that involved students are more likely to promote an event or lead a discussion than mediate a dispute or develop a budget.

<b>During the current academic year, how often have you done the following activities in a student club or organization?</b>	<b>More than 5 times</b>	<b>3-5 times</b>	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Promoted or marketed an event</b>	21%	19%	26%	35%
<b>Led or facilitated a discussion</b>	20%	13%	25%	42%
<b>Recruited new members for the organization/club</b>	19%	15%	31%	35%
<b>Delegated tasks to others</b>	19%	15%	23%	43%
<b>Planned an event</b>	17%	14%	26%	43%
<b>Chaired a meeting</b>	14%	6%	14%	67%
<b>Partnered with a community organization or organized community outreach</b>	12%	14%	32%	43%
<b>Mediated a dispute</b>	8%	9%	24%	59%
<b>Developed a budget</b>	7%	6%	17%	70%

Table 2: Activities performed as part of a student organization

Involved students were asked how important their interactions with other students in clubs and organizations has been to several characteristics and skills. Table 3 shows that students see the importance of interacting with others, as well as developing other marketable skills, such as presentation skills.

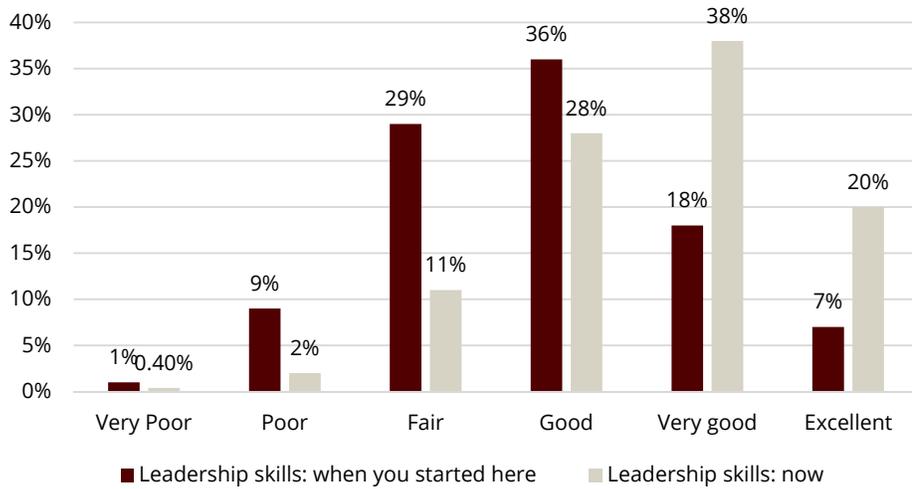
<b>Please rate how important your interactions with other students in student clubs and organizations has been to each of the following:</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Of no importance</b>
<b>Developing an ability to work with others to accomplish a goal</b>	42%	38%	14%	5%
<b>Developing networking skills</b>	41%	36%	16%	7%
<b>Developing oral presentation skills</b>	33%	35%	21%	11%
<b>Becoming more dependable and reliable</b>	31%	40%	22%	7%
<b>Developing knowledge of how organizations work</b>	30%	42%	23%	5%
<b>Understanding how to succeed in competitive situations</b>	27%	37%	24%	11%
<b>Learning how to resolve disputes</b>	26%	35%	27%	12%
<b>Developing writing skills</b>	21%	27%	28%	24%

Table 3: Importance of a variety of skills



All respondents were asked about their level of proficiency in certain areas when they started at Texas A&M and now. Figure 1 indicates that undergraduate students think they have increased their leadership abilities since they have been at the university.

Figure 1: Leadership Gains



Conclusion

Undergraduate students at Texas A&M University have a many opportunities to get involved, lead organizations, and learn from their experiences. Although students do get involved, they tend to spend more time in academic activities. Students do gain a variety of marketable skills through their involvement and leadership experiences that they can apply in the future. Texas A&M should continue to provide meaningful high impact leadership and learning opportunities for students.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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